

EXTRA LEZING



OCMW & NINO-LEZING 25-11-2014

Edward William Lane and Ancient Egypt *Jason Thompson*

Edward William Lane (1801-1876) is well remembered as one of the greatest of nineteenth-century orientalists. His reputation is firmly established with such works as *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), his annotated translation of the *Arabian Nights* (1839-41), and his magisterial *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863-93). As the late Professor Edward Said commented, Lane was “an authority whose use was an imperative for anyone writing or thinking about the Orient, not just about Egypt.”

It is not generally recognized, however, that Lane's original inspiration was ancient Egypt. And even after his primary research interests transposed to modern Arab society and language, ancient Egypt remained in his thoughts and in his work. From 1825 onwards, Lane traveled and worked extensively in Egypt, twice ascending to the Second Cataract. His first book manuscript, *Description of Egypt*, a magnificent illustrated work that he was unable to publish during his lifetime, is primarily Egyptological in content, and his papers, now mostly in the Griffith Institute at Oxford, show a serious, imaginative commitment to the study of ancient Egypt. Had *Description of Egypt* been published as Lane intended, he would be remembered today as a pioneering Egyptologist as well as a great orientalist.

The intent of this paper is to explore the range of Lane's Egyptological work and to assess his contribution to the nascent science of Egyptology. It will examine the reasons why the impact of that important contribution was limited and suggest ways in which it can be understood and appreciated today. In the process it will reveal a fascinating episode in the Western encounter with Egypt, both ancient and modern.

Jason Thompson's acclaimed biography *Edward William Lane 1801-1876: The Life of the Pioneering Egyptologist and Orientalist* (AUC Press, 2010) will this year be supplemented by *Wonderful Things: A History of Egyptology, Vol. I: From Antiquity to 1881* (AUC Press).

Lipsius 028

dinsdag 25 november

17.00 uur

NINO-lezingen

Maandelijks organiseert het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten een lezing over actueel onderzoek naar het oude Nabije Oosten. De lezingen worden gehouden in het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Rapenburg 28, Leiden.

Extra lezing

In samenwerking met de opleiding Oude Culturen van de Mediterrane Wereld (OCMW) wordt deze extra lezing ingelast.

Let op: afwijkende plaats en tijd!

Dinsdag 25 november om 17.00 uur in het Lipsius-gebouw, zaal 028. Voertaal: Engels. Vrij entree.

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